

Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana



Date **July 1, 2012**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian**

Name of Facility **Bossier City Animal Shelter**

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include...

- Louisiana minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities and quarantine facilities, Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana Revised Statutes 2431 et seq.
 - This statute addresses requirements for veterinary treatment of animals, limitations on fees, authority of parish governments to adopt, general shelter standards, shelter construction, shelter operating procedures, sterilization requirements, adoption standards, and branding.
- Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians, Louisiana Revised Statutes , Title 37, Chapter 18B, Louisiana Revised Statutes 1551 et seq.
- The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III
- American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia (http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf)

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the

Humane Society of the United States, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians in shelter evaluations. Resources are listed below:

- National Animal Control Association Guidelines
(<http://www.nacanet.org/guidelines.html>)
- Humane Society of the United States Guidelines for the Operation of an Animal Shelter
(http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/guidelines_for_animal_shelter_operations.html)
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, Association of Shelter Veterinarians
(http://www.sheltervet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks_with%20security.pdf)

The list of questions below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as "**MANDATED**") and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.

A. Animal Euthanasia

1. ☒Y ☐N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?
There are three licensed animal euthanasia technicians.
2. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. ☒Y ☐N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?
5. ☒Y ☐N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
There are two.
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
8. ☒Y ☐N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?

These drugs are stored in a locked safe.

9. ☒Y ☐N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?

Although euthanasia is rarely performed in the field, on occasion the supervisor will approve field euthanasia and the solution must be maintained in a lock box on the truck.

10. ☒Y ☐N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:

11. ☐Y ☐N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?

NA. There is NO GAS CHAMBER!

B. Management:

1. ☒Y ☐N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?

Course completed in 2009

2. ☒Y ☐N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?

3. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?

No regular on-site veterinarian exists, however routine veterinary consultations are sought on a fee for services basis at several local veterinary offices.

4. ☐Y ☒N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian

5. ☐Y ☒N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?

LAWC recommends that some local government authority establish a program whereby a written evaluation of the animal shelter is done twice per year.

6. ☒Y ☐N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?

7. ☒Y ☐N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?

The standard rule is that only one animal is permitted per cage. In rare situations, animals originating from the same home are housed together, however not if opposite genders and intact.

8. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?

9. ☐Y ☒N Have staff been immunized against rabies?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that animal control personnel receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. The vaccine regimen is comparatively expensive and many shelters only administer

vaccinations to workers who have been employed for some specified duration (usually 6 months to one year). The Bossier City Animal Shelter should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work. The Bossier Parish area is considered endemic for skunk variant rabies, so a real danger exists.

10. ☒Y ☐N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
Parish animal control personnel will collect nuisance wildlife rarely. Any personnel trapping or handling wild animals should receive rabies vaccination (pre-exposure).
11. ☐Y ☐N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
NA
12. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
Yes. For liability reasons this shelter does not adopt our pit bulls of pit bull crosses.
13. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. ☐Y ☒N Was this shelter a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. ☐Y ☒N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?
Although the Bossier City Animal Shelter abides by parish ordinances in issues related to poisoning, failure to care for, abandonment, stray and nuisance animals, private citizen animal confinement, exotic animals, and rabies control; shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinance. Local government officials are strongly urged to include shelter standards in local ordinances.
17. ☐Y ☒N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
The emergency telephone number is NOT displayed on the exterior of the building. LAWC recommends that this oversight is corrected as soon as possible.
18. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?
19. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

C. Records:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are records computerized?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture,

location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.

3. ☐ Y ☒ N Do the animals' records document daily observation?
Although individual records do not document daily observation, all animals in each kennel are evaluated daily. This is done primarily by the staff in their daily walk through, and daily duties always bring problems to the attention of the Supervisor or Office Manager. A table addressing appropriate reactions to common medical conditions is part of the standard operating procedures.
4. ☒ Y ☐ N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?
Animals are scanned upon intake, prior to euthanasia, before adoption, and in the field.

D. General Structure:

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?
Cats are offloaded in carriers, therefore although the area is open-air, proper precautions in offloading cats are taken to prevent escape. The area is adequately secure for canines.
2. ☒ Y ☐ N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?
3. ☒ Y ☐ N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?
4. ☒ Y ☐ N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?
The area for outdoor storage is secure (protected by chain link fencing topped with razor wire), however it appears additional enclosed storage sheds or containers may be desirable. Some of the storage area appears a bit cluttered and not particularly well organized.
5. ☒ Y ☐ N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?
6. ☒ Y ☐ N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?
7. ☐ Y ☒ N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?

E. Water and Electric Power:

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
2. ☒ Y ☐ N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. ☒ Y ☐ N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. ☒ Y ☐ N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5. ☒ Y ☐ N Is hot water available?

6. ☐Y ☒N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?
Although none is available, the shelter can acquire a generator on an ad hoc basis. LAWC strongly recommends acquisition of a generator for use in emergencies and with routine prolonged loss of power.
7. ☐Y ☒N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
When not elevated 3 to 4 feet above the floor, self closing receptacle covers are deployed and effectively prevent animals from coming in contact with power outlets.
8. ☒Y ☐N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
On counter top work areas, receptacle outlets do not have covers, but are GFI protected. Animals, especially cats, should not be released to walk on countertops.
9. ☒Y ☐N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
11. ☐Y ☒N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?
There is no toe space. Should funds become available, a true veterinary wash station should be purchased, providing a much more comfortable and safer working environment.
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a restroom for staff use?
There are seven restrooms and one shower.

F. Waste Disposal:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
A walk-in freezer is present at the shelter and is used for carcass storage.
2. ☒Y ☐N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
See above!
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?
Medical waste is incinerated in an in-house incinerator.

G. Storage:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
Space appears available, but more enclosed storage areas would be desirable. At present, areas that are intended for use for isolation, animal housing or display are utilized for storage.
2. ☐Y ☐N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
Storage areas are large enough to adequately separate cleaning supplies and food from other stored items.
3. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?

4. ☐Y ☒N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
Loose dry food particles were observed on the floor in ancillary food storage areas.
5. ☒Y ☐N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. ☐Y ☐N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?
Some dry food is stored in bags stacked directly on the floor and against the wall in some areas originally intended for animal housing. This does not permit adequate air circulation around food products and may adversely affect shelf-life. Food should be elevated off the floor on shelves or pallets, and should be stored at least four inches from the walls. Elevation of food permits visualization of loose food particles that may spill from torn or partially open dry food bags.
7. ☐Y ☒N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?
It is an excellent idea to remove dry food from any opened bag and place the food in some type of sealed container. This prevents infestation by vermin.

H. Primary Enclosures:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is one dog housed per pen?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?
4. ☒Y ☐N Do the pens have tops on them?
5. ☒Y ☐N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?
6. ☒Y ☐N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?
8. ☐Y ☒N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
In some cases guillotine doors separate indoor and outdoor access. In other instances, cages are on outdoor plaza areas. Other areas are 100% indoor. Green exercise space is available for dog walking.
9. ☒Y ☐N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
10. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
11. ☒Y ☐N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?

13. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?

14. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

I. Feeding/ Watering:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?

There is adequate counter space in cat wards. Mobile tables are used to deliver food from prep areas.

2. ☐Y ☒N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?

Heavy stainless steel buckets are used for water in large dog kennels. The buckets are filled near capacity and are constantly observed for tipping. Smaller stainless steel water bowls are utilized for smaller dogs and cats. These containers are also constantly monitored throughout the day.

3. ☒Y ☐N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?

4. ☐Y ☒N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?

There is a shortage of drying racks at this facility. Should funding become available, LAWC recommends that racks are used to facilitate complete drying of steel-ware. This procedure should prevent the growth or persistence of certain microorganisms on the dishes.

J. Pest Control:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?

There is a contract for monthly service from a licensed pest control company.

2. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?

Animals are observed on entry. If infestations are noted animals are treated with donated flea control products, if available. Also infested animals are bathed routinely in flea shampoo.

3. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?

4. ☐Y ☒N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasitocides?

The protocol dealing with personal protective equipment does not mention administration of external parasitocides (e.g. flea spray). If any type of external pesticide or paraciticide is used, a minimum of impervious gloves should be utilized by personnel.

K. Rabies Quarantine

1. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*

2. ☒Y ☐N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?

An isolation ward for rabies and aggressive animals is present. A "Rabies Quarantine" sign is placed on each cage housing a quarantined animal. The public cannot enter this area and employees have been trained to recognize the meaning of cage signs.

3. ☒Y ☐N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
4. ☐Y ☐N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?
NA
5. ☒Y ☐N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
6. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
7. ☒Y ☐N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
8. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem in animals taken into the facility. Your answers should reflect the gravity of the problem in incoming animals, not persistent problems at the facility.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Scabies (mange) |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Ringworm (dermatophytes) |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Parvovirus |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline diarrhea |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline leukemia |

M. Infection Control

1. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?
Incoming animals must be placed in the stray (non-aggressive strays), quarantine (rabies observation or aggressive animals) or isolation area (sick or injured animals) for a fixed amount of time. The mandatory holding period is three FULL business days. Evaluations take place in this initial period.
2. ☐Y ☒N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
All animals determined to be adoptable are dewormed and vaccinated.

3. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
- a. ☐Y ☐N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
NA
5. ☐Y ☒N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
Only adoptable are de-wormed
- a. ☒Y ☐N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)
6. ☒Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
Not all animals are rabies vaccinated. Some receive vouchers so that vaccines can be administered after adoption.
7. ☒Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?
Vouchers are given when an animal is adopted.

N. Population Control

1. ☐Y ☒N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
The
3. ☒Y ☐N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?
The legal requirements are fulfilled. Bossier is in full compliance with the state statute requiring that adopted animals are spayed and neutered.

Additional comments:

Bossier City Animal Shelter employs the use of written protocols regarding...

- Animal intake procedure
- Housing decisions after intake
- Limiting transmission of disease
- Staff kennel duties
- Canine and feline feeding procedures
- Morning cleaning routines in canine and feline wards
- Disinfection of cages after these structures are vacated
- Medical protocol for incoming animals

- Treatment protocol for sick/injured animals or animals breaking with disease after entry
- Physical examination of animals
- Using memos in the animal record
- Spay and neuter contracts
- Adoptions
- Dog walking
- Working in the food prep area
- Washing the dishes
- Environmental enrichment of dogs and cats
- Assisting the public in seeking and reuniting lost pets
- Handling of "found" animals
- Euthanasia decisions
- Euthanasia technical procedures
- Personal safety and use of PPE for employees
- Animal handling safety
- Restraint of animals
- Approaching fearful animals
- Security of controlled substances
- Telephone interaction with the public
- Media contacts.

The euthanasia room is state of the art, is isolated and is easily disinfected. Handling of deceased animal is performed in an exemplary manner with an on-site crematory.

Kennel staff (managers) makes the initial recommendation for euthanasia and adoption. All decisions are reviewed and are either approved or brought before the entire management team for a discussion and final decision. This is an effective two tiered approval process.

The organizational structure of the shelter...

Animals are held a minimum of three full business days. During the three day plus hold, the dogs and cats are observed for temperament, and shelter staff monitors health status. At the end of three full days, aggressive animals and animals whose physical condition precludes adoption are euthanized.

Upon intake, animals are transferred to the stray area and are observed as explained above. After this initial screening animals are placed in the adoption, isolation, or quarantine areas. The isolation area is for sick and injured animals. Some animals go directly to the isolation area if the illness or injury is apparent on intake. Aggressive animals are taken to the quarantine area, along with animals intended for rabies observation. Again, animals apparently aggressive on intake are taken immediately to the quarantine area.

Suggestions for improvement:


The recommendation from shelter experts (HSUS, Association of Shelter Veterinarians) to better exercise infection control is to vaccinate all animals on intake. This should be a future goal of the Bossier City Animal Shelter, although additional funding would be necessary.

In a facility of this size, it would be desirable to either employ a full or part-time veterinarian that regularly attends animals at the shelter. A contract with a veterinarian on an ad hoc basis is also an option. LAWC realizes that this action often entails increases in expenditures and requirements for additions to the budget. LAWC, however, recommends that the shelter consider this goal in the future.

Implementation of a rabies pre-exposure vaccination program for animal handling employees should be considered.

RATING:

- ☐ Generally exceeds standards
- ☒ Meets standards
- ☐ Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM : 
Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee
LAWC

Date: 10-12-12